



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1940

What is thought to be a record catch--10,000 pounds in one set--of monk, or goosefish, brought in to the Boston Fish Pier recently, may mark the birth of a new industry, according to Henry M. Bearse, New England groundfish investigator for the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

More properly called the angler fish, this species is familiarly known in the Gulf of Maine and is common, too, in Massachusetts Bay, south of Boston. Scaleless and smooth, with an enormous mouth, it is a mottled brown above, white below, averages 3 to 4 feet in length, and about 45 pounds in weight. Noted for its variety in diet and voracious appetite, it eats at least 40 varieties of fish and shellfish and 10 of sea birds--including mergansers, gulls, auks, loons, and possibly geese, whence its commoner name. One was found which had captured and eaten 7 wild ducks at one meal; another contained a lobster-pot buoy.

It has been marketed at Boston in small lots for a special trade before. This recent market appearance, however, is the first time it has been attempted by the large offshore otter trawlers. It is well thought of in England as an article of food, but in the North Atlantic waters has been considered a nuisance by the fishermen, or, at best, a source of livers for reduction purposes.

In addition to providing a new product for the buyers on the Fish Exchange to bid on, this goosefish exceeded all known records. The species is practically universal in the catches of all types of gear both inshore and offshore; although the aggregate quantity is large, however, the individual sets or hauls rarely have taken more than a few hundred pounds.

The marketed portion of the fish, the tail, which amounts to about 20 per cent of the total weight, comprises only a small section of the body. This could be increased to around 30 per cent by more careful cutting of the body, according to the statement of Iver Carlson, captain of the trawler Wave, which made the record catch.

This unusual fare was sold on the Exchange for  $1\frac{1}{4}$  cents a pound, and purchased by one of the dealers for experimental purposes. The results of this attempt to utilize the species will be watched with interest, because the potential supply of monkfish is large and the edible portion is reported to be very excellent eating.

#